

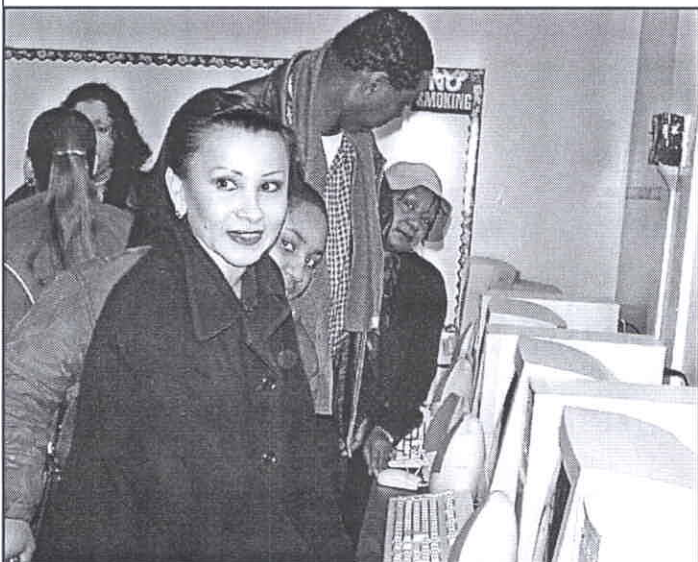
Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democrat, House Small Business Committee



Velázquez To Host NYCHA Town Hall Meetings Community invited to plan for housing policy hearing

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez will host a series of town hall meetings to discuss the New York City Housing Authority's plan for the coming year. The meetings will help prepare the community for the August 21 hearing NYCHA must hold by law to discuss its plan.



Congresswoman Velázquez has long supported rights for housing residents. Here she meets with tenants in Williamsburg.

NYCHA is proposing several controversial new policies that require a response. For example, NYCHA will soon impose a community service requirement on tenants signing new leases.

The agency also proposes to change how rent in public housing is determined. While NYCHA is moving toward a flat rent system, there may be no protection against rent increases in the meantime.

Lastly, NYCHA would like to promote "deconcentration of poverty" housing by encouraging higher-income families to move to public housing. But this may be done at the expense of current tenants and those most in need of public housing.

Your town hall meeting with Congresswoman Velázquez will be held Wednesday, August 15, 2001, at the Church of the Open Door, 7:00 p.m., 201 Gold Street in Southwest Brooklyn.

Velázquez Unveils Patients' Bill of Rights Bill would require bilingual services at HMOs

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, in her continuing fight to increase patients' rights and access to quality healthcare, unveiled legislation titled "The Managed Care Bill of Rights for Consumers" last month.

The bill includes:

- coverage for prescription medicine and standards for generic substitutions
- coverage for all medical emergencies, choice of doctor, guaranteed gynecological and specialist care
- continuity of treatment after contract termination
- patient confidentiality
- an appeals process for HMO decisions.

The bill also establishes a Managed Care Consumer Advisory Commission to help consumers understand their rights, access services, and make informed decisions about their health care plan.

This legislation will focus on one critical aspect of the healthcare debate that has been overlooked – the health needs of minority communities, particularly the Spanish-speaking population. In New York City alone, 20 percent of the population speaks a language other than English.

For many not speaking English as their first language, negotiating managed care is overwhelming and frightening. Velázquez's bill would require bilingual medical services for languages spoken by at least two percent of HMO enrollees. This bill is aimed at helping language minorities gain the access they need to reliable, quality healthcare.

Court Says Power Plants Require Health Review

Community activists praise win for environmental justice

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez hailed a New York Appellate Division decision last month ruling that the state broke the law by failing to conduct environmental impact surveys for air pollution caused by the placement of low-wattage power plants in Sunset Park and throughout the metropolitan region.

Community members and activists, who filed the lawsuit, celebrated at a press conference the day the decision was announced. Congresswoman Velázquez congratulated the groups that organized to stop this assault on the City's environment, including New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, New York Public Interest Research Group, CURE, UPROSE, El Puente, Williamsburg Watch, Nos Quedamos, NYCEJA, NRDC, Stop the Barge, The Point CDC and NAG.

"This is a major victory for environmental justice in Brooklyn," Velázquez declared "The law says and the court agreed: the state cannot locate new, polluting industry without determining how it affects those living there. Poor and minority communities are more likely to have dirty power plants located in their neighborhoods. It is no wonder the court specifically cited asthma-inducing pollution, as this district has one of the highest asthma rates in the City."

Velázquez has long fought against placement of industry that pollutes the water and air. She has opposed both the City's and state's attempt to locate waste transfer stations and power plants in the 12th District. In Washington, Congresswoman Velázquez has filed two Environmental Justice complaints with the Environmental Protection Agency's now-threatened Environmental Justice office in order to prevent the siting of more polluting facilities in Red Hook, Williamsburg and Greenpoint. In January, she testified against the plant siting before Community Board #7 and the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Threat Isn't Over: More NYC-Area Plants Waiting for State Approval

PROJECT	LOCATION	SIZE
East River	Manhattan	360 mw
East Coast Power-Linden	Linden, N.J.	90 mw
NISA Electric	Brooklyn	79.9mw
NRGAstoria	Queens	79.9mw
Gotham Power-Bronx	Bronx	79 mw
Gotham Power-Brooklyn	Brooklyn	40 mw

Velázquez Praises New Manhattan Bridge Park

Waterfront park and playground replace industrial decay



Local officials gather for groundbreaking at new Brooklyn Bridge Park in under the Manhattan Bridge last month.

Congresswoman Velázquez applauded the groundbreaking for a City portion of a planned waterfront park at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge. This 1.5 acre parcel of land is the first part of a larger 70-acre planned Brooklyn Bridge Park, stretching south along the 12th Congressional District waterfront. The waterfront has been dominated by underused industrial break-bulk piers and fences barring the public. This groundbreaking starts the conversion of a City parking lot into a waterfront green space with hills, walkways, a children's playground and a rocky cove that will complete part of the existing Empire Fulton Ferry State Park now under renovation.

The Congresswoman congratulated the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition for its 15 years of community advocacy for a waterfront park and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation for completing the master plan for the park with extensive community input. Over the next two years the Environmental Impact Study and further design of the rest of the park will take place.

"What remains is to ensure that the public stay involved

in every step of the planning process, that the dedicated park land is protected, and that the park moves forward as a whole," the Congresswoman said. She has submitted a spending request to Congress for an in-depth study of alternative modes of access to the park, maximizing the number of park visitors and employees arriving by mass transit, jitney, trolley, foot and bike by exploring such things as greenway connections.

Grants Awarded to Our Community

Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service.....\$431,564

Supports Head Start childhood development program

New York Foundation for the Arts.....\$250,000

Supports film documenting U.S. folk music